

NEW BOOK ANNOUNCEMENT

HELEN HAMILTON AND GUSTAVUS HALL. 2013. **Wildflowers & Grasses of Virginia's Coastal Plain**. (ISBN: 978-1-889878-41-6, flexbound). Sida, Botanical Miscellany 40. Botanical Research Institute of Texas Press, 1700 University Drive, Fort Worth, Texas 76107-3400, U.S.A. (**Orders:** www.britpress.org, 1-817-332-4441). \$24.95, 288 pp., 6" x 9".

From articles written and published by the first author in newspapers over the past 7 years, a book has been created about Virginia's Coastal Plain wildflowers and grasses. The second author Dr. Gustavus Hall, Professor Emeritus, College of William and Mary, rewrote portions of the text to ensure botanical accuracy. Louise Menges, Editor, maintained the photo inventory, selected appropriate images for each page, and designed the layout of each page.

Sponsored by the John Clayton Chapter of the Virginia Native Plant Society, many plants included are native to the Coastal Plain of Virginia; some are introduced from other areas in the U.S. and from other countries. Included are non-woody plants often seen along roadsides, in meadows, gardens, and lawns. Many are weedy, with small flowers, not usually seen in field guides. Also included are grasses commonly seen in Virginia's Coastal Plain.

The plants included here occur in most counties of the Coastal Plain of Virginia, and some may be found throughout the Atlantic and Gulf coastal plains from Cape Cod to Mexico. Originally, the book was conceived to include only plants native to the Coastal Plain. In decades of field work, the authors have observed very conspicuous non-native (introduced) plants displacing natives in many locations. These familiar, introduced plants are in the book, to help users distinguish desirable native plants from unwanted species.

The plants are arranged in the book by flower color (white, yellow, orange, red, pink, blue, violet, green, brown), indicated by a colored rectangle on the upper edge of the page. The grasses and grass-like plants (tan rectangle) are in the last section of the book. Within each color group the plants are arranged alphabetically by families. Photographs on each page show the most prominent feature of each plant, usually the flower.

Text follows the photographs with user-friendly descriptions of the plant's characteristics, habitat, range and growing conditions, and interesting facts about uses in folk medicine, by the Native Americans, and origins of the plant's names.

All photographs were contributed by members of local chapters of the Virginia Native Plant Society: Ellis Squires from the Northern Neck Chapter; and from the local John Clayton Chapter, Teta Kain, Seig Kopinitz, Louise Menges, Kathi Mestayer, Phillip Merritt, and Jan Newton; and Felice Bond from the Historic Rivers Chapter of the Virginia Master Naturalists.

Dr. Donna Ware, retired Herbarium Curator, College of William and Mary, has written the Preface; the book was peer-reviewed by Dr. John Hayden, Botanist, University of Richmond; and Bland Crowder, Editor of the *Flora of Virginia*, has done the copy editing.

Additional information about the plants can be found in the "Further Reading" section of the book which follows the list of references the authors have used throughout. For readers wishing more information about each plant featured within, *Flora of Virginia* (2012) is the definitive resource for technical botanical information.

"*Wildflowers and Grasses of Virginia's Coastal Plain* is much more than a field guide to the region. The scientific accuracy of the volume is augmented by the useful and idiosyncratic text which is woven throughout. This style of writing allows the reader to painlessly obtain a well-rounded education in taxonomy and species relationships, the derivation of scientific names, uses of plants by humans, quirks of plant habitats and distributions, and innumerable fascinating and useful facts that seldom appear in any plant guide. With the inclusion of grass-like species, the book also ventures into territory often neglected by popular botanical texts. In short, the reader will become well-informed and enjoy the process!"—Johnny Townsend, co-author of *Flora of Virginia* and Botanist, Virginia Natural Heritage Program, Department of Conservation and Recreation, Richmond, Virginia.

